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Economic and Social Council

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Resumed substantive session of 2013

Summary record of the 55th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 14 January 2014, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Osorio ..... (Colombia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*) (E/2013/L.44)

Draft decision E/2013/L.44: Theme for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development for 2014

1. **The President**, introducing the draft decision, which he had submitted to the Council on the basis of informal consultations, said that while member States did not object to the theme proposed for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development for 2014, greater clarity was still needed on a number of issues, including the timetable and the nature of any outcome document or ministerial declaration. The Bureau had sought legal advice and had been informed that, in accordance with the precedents set within the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council, the High-level Political Forum and the Economic and Social Council could not have separate ministerial declarations; there could be only one ministerial declaration, which must be adopted independently by the two entities.

2. **Mr. Llorentty Solíz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that all Members of the Organization wanted a seamless transition from the annual ministerial review to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. While the mandates of the two processes could be considered complementary, they were different. The High-level Political Forum and its role in sustainable development were of major importance and the Group therefore hoped for a strong outcome, agreed pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 61/16, 67/290 and 68/1, given the need to strengthen the Council and ensure that it played a central role in implementing the sustainable development agenda.

3. As the Group did not want the theme to prejudge the discussions, the modalities or the outcome of the High-level Political Forum, more time would be needed to allow member States to discuss the theme and the outcome of both processes, in a creative and open-minded manner.

4. **The President** said that, as more time was needed for consultation on the proposed theme, he took it that the Council did not wish to take action on the draft decision.

5. *It was so decided.*

Dates of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development for 2014

6. **The President** said that the proposed dates for the five days of non-ministerial meetings of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development for 2014, under the auspices of the Council, were 30 June to 3 July 2014, with evening meetings on 30 June and 1 July. The three-day ministerial segment of the High-level Political Forum, as provided for in General Assembly resolution 67/290, would be held from 7 to 9 July 2014.

National voluntary presentations in 2014

7. **The President** said that each year the Council's annual ministerial review featured national voluntary presentations providing an opportunity to track States' progress with regard to the United Nations development agenda. Those presentations had become a valuable instrument for sharing lessons learned and addressing development gaps and obstacles. Bolivia (Plurinational State of), the Gambia, Georgia, Kuwait, Mexico, Qatar, the Sudan, Thailand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the State of Palestine would all give national voluntary presentations in 2014.

The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2012 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council (*continued*)

8. **The President** said that he had been informed that, regrettably, no agreement had been reached in the informal consultations on the role of the United Nations system in promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Given the importance of the proposal discussed, he hoped that the Council would give further consideration to its content in the future.

Closure of the session

9. **The President** said that during 2013 the Council had begun its transformation to adapt to the new global agenda and meet new aspirations. Those efforts had culminated in the adoption of General Assembly resolution 68/1, which had introduced the most far-reaching reform of the Council since 1991. The renewed Council and the High-level Political Forum on

Sustainable Development, under the auspices of the Council, would be the cornerstones of the new sustainable development architecture. The Council's new meeting cycle, with its different segments spread out over the year, would provide for more focused discussions, and the selection of an annual theme would unite the entire United Nations development system in a holistic and comprehensive examination of specific development issues.

10. The Council's newly created integration segment would draw upon the outcomes of the other segments and the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies and the United Nations system, bringing together Member States and relevant stakeholders to discuss policies for integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development, with a view to producing effective policy recommendations and guidance. The 2014-2015 period would be a time of transition for the Council, as it adapted to its new segment structure and the High-level Political Forum began its work in support of the post-2015 development agenda.

11. Further to the 2013 annual ministerial review, which had highlighted the important role that science, technology, innovation and culture could play in overcoming contemporary problems such as extreme poverty, inequality and environmental degradation, the ministerial declaration of the 2013 high-level segment had underscored the role of science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, in enabling and driving the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and promoting the three dimensions of sustainable development. In the thematic debate, many member States had agreed that the post-2015 development agenda should build on the Millennium Development Goals, with poverty eradication and sustainable development at its core. The post-2015 development agenda should include a development strategy capable of promoting inclusive, job-creating growth, while guaranteeing environmental sustainability; it must also be seen to be universal and inclusive, with specific goals and conditions to ensure that the results achieved were irreversible. A renewed and strengthened global partnership for development, based on Millennium Development Goal 8, was therefore needed.

12. To implement that global partnership it would be necessary to mobilize and effectively channel financial resources for development. Efforts to reverse the real-term decline in official development assistance and ensure compliance with all commitments should be linked to an improvement in domestic resource mobilization. In that connection, as the World Bank had noted in its report *Financing for Development Post-2015*, developing countries would need to step up efforts to strengthen tax administration, better harness natural resource revenue, and curb illicit financial flows.

13. The 2013 operational activities segment had highlighted the progress made in implementing General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, while the humanitarian affairs segment had examined how all stakeholders could adapt and respond better to humanitarian demands, thereby also facilitating the dialogue on the World Humanitarian Summit to be held in 2015. The general segment had focused on a number of key issues, including the implementation of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns, as mandated by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

14. With regard to peace and security, the Council had considered lessons learned from the transition of a number of African countries emerging from conflict, such as South Sudan. The progress made and obstacles remaining with regard to the situation in Haiti had been another key issue for the Council, which had extended the mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, demonstrating its commitment to a deeper relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission. The Council had also addressed the concerns and expectations of young people; provided a platform for generating new partnerships; and established the implementation forum, which had focused on concrete actions to promote science and technology for development.

15. The new institutional architecture, which sought to align international solutions with national interests, was based on the High-level Political Forum, the General Assembly and the Council, acting in unison. Member States were increasingly aware of the need to enhance further the coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the United Nations development system, and the Council was uniquely placed to contribute to the elaboration, implementation, monitoring and follow-up of the post-2015 development agenda, given the expertise it had acquired in many key development issues, including as a result of reviewing and monitoring the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The Council could provide a platform for the global monitoring, accountability and

coordination of the implementation of the United Nations development agenda, and forge greater participation by a broad range of relevant stakeholders, including young people and private sector partners.

16. In order to ensure that the reformed Council met the needs of all stakeholders, it should provide more added value and bring greater coherence, collective thinking and global policymaking to the United Nations system. The fundamental aspirations of improving lives around the world and the sustainability of the planet must be at the centre of the Council's efforts, and its members must mobilize their common resources and energies to address them effectively. Expectations were high and the Council could not afford to fail.

17. He declared closed the 2013 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.